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## **FACE TO FACE WITH THE VIRTUAL OFFENDER: Internet Sex Offenders in the Courtroom**

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# **Internet Offending and Net Crimes**

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# Quick Glance: Internet Pornography

- It is estimated to be a \$3 billion annual industry
- Nearly 15% of all websites (4.5 million) have pornographic content
- Over 25% of total search engines requests are for pornography
- 35% of downloads (over 1.5 billion per month) are pornographic
- Over 75 million people annually visit porn web sites
- Men constitute 86% of the cyber-pornography users but women are a significant presence in erotically-oriented chat rooms that sometimes lead to face-to-face meetings or relationships
- More than half of the pornography users are married or in a committed relationship
- Before the Internet, between one-fifth and one-third of people arrested for possession of child pornography were also involved in actual abuse
- Those convicted of sexually abusing children will not necessarily seek out or collect child pornography, with one study putting the number of offenders who do so at around 10 percent

# Topics of Discussion

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- Child Pornography or Sexual Exploitation of a Minor
- Typologies of Internet Sexual Offenders
- Research
- Criminal Justice System Response

# Internet Child Pornography

- Acquisition of Child Pornography through the internet and downloading it onto the computer, either through a hard drive, external drive, thumb drive, CD or Cloud-like device.
- Primarily includes images of prepubescent children
- Taking the pictures

# Internet Child Pornography con't

- Distribution, either manually/intentionally or through peer/peer shareware like Limewire, Bearshare, etc.
- Child Pornography - Distribution only.
  - This is (absent any proof that the person has any sexual interest in children)

# Sexual Exploitation of a Minor

- Luring a minor for sexual exploitation (taking pictures) or for sexual contact (child molestation, sex conduct).
- Luring local versus luring traveler

# Sexual Exploitation of a Minor con't

- Exposing via the net
  - Using a webcam to target children
  - Using webcam to target adults who will do sexual things with minors while being viewed
- This is the exploitative exhibition of one's genitals:
  - nipple/areola
  - vagina
  - anus
  - penis
  - Testicles
- Actual or simulated



# Sexual Exploitation of a Minor can't

- Adult Pornography for a minor to view. This must be done "purposefully."

# Online Contacts with Minors

- Many online contacts develop into off-line encounters
- A danger of online cybersex is that offenders often make contact with children or adolescents who are lured into meeting them and are then molested

# Relationship of Net Crimes to the Sexual Offense Cycle

- Victim Posture

## Anticipated Rejection

## Social and Emotional Isolation

- Need Fulfilling Fantasies
- Sexual Deviant Fantasy
- Making a Plan
  - Cruising and Grooming
- Acting Out
- Transitory Guilt
- Reconstitution

# Need Fulfilling Fantasies

- Because of their lack of emotional intimacy, their needs are met through what we've referred to as need fulfilling fantasies.
- And the need fulfilling fantasies include:
  - Revenge
  - Power and Control
  - Attention, affection and affiliation
- Includes such things as:
  - Wealth
  - Getting even
  - Idealized love relationships

# Sexual Deviant Fantasies

- This includes the gamut of Paraphilic (deviant) fantasies, sex with children, rape fantasies, sadism, masochism, etc. (This usually includes masturbatory activities.)
- Initial stage of fantasy enactment involve the adult describing a particular scenario, for example,
  - Adult: I am lying naked in a warm bath and you are sitting at the edge of the bath wearing only a silk robe that falls open
- In the majority of interactions of this nature, the ultimate goal of fantasy enactment is the achievement of sexual gratification
- Fantasy seems to be an important element of the adult's interactions with the child and for the fantasy to work there seems to be a need for the child to appear willing to engage in on-line sexual activities

# Internet Victim Selection

- In teen chat rooms the activities that precede the processes of initiating direct contact with a child may simply involve the adult providing a description of him/herself to all of the users of the public chat room so that he/she is masquerading as a particular kind of child, of a particular age in the hope of attracting an equivalent age and same or opposite sex child.
- for example: *Adult1: '13/m/phx'*

# Internet Grooming

- Examples of internet grooming:
  - *Child: what age r u?*
  - *Adult: whats too old?*
  - *Child: I don't know*
  - *Adult: 20s 30's*
  - *Child ☺*
  - *Adult: I'm 35, is that too old?*
- *Adult: 'hey angel, sounds like things are hard for you right now you wanna chat'*

# Internet Sexual Offending

- For example 'maybe we could meet some day and I could show you how much I love you' or 'maybe you could take photographs of you touching yourself'.
- The nature of sexual conversation will vary from mild suggestions to explicit descriptions of, for example, oral sex.
- The focus may be on the child, i.e. the adult asking the child to touch itself and to explain what it feels like.
- The usual rationale for this approach is that the adult is somehow perceived as a mentor who will guide the child to a greater understanding of his or her own sexuality.
- This can sometimes be taken a little further with the promise that by engaging in these activities the child will grow to become a wonderful lover.
- The interaction may be about how to self-masturbate and if the adult is a different gender to the child he will explain the techniques a child could use if they were together so that the child could bring the adult to orgasm.



# Transitory Guilt

- Investigators may experience this during the initial interview.
- The person feels some sense of guilt, but it's typically transitory, doesn't last long, anywhere from a few seconds to maybe a day or even longer.
- May involve very positive encouragement and high praise for a child and it seems reasonable to conclude that the intention is to reduce the risk of a frightened child divulging details of the online activities to anybody else
- Example:
  - "I will never look at porn again."
  - "I really did not see anything."
  - "Those pictures were fake."

# Reconstitution

- Transitory guilt is often managed through Reconstitution.
- This is where the person promises not to ever do it again.
  - Then moves to behaviors designed to manage the guilt like becoming a really good husband or going to church, or if they already went to church, increasing their level of commitment to church, prayer, enrolling in treatment programs that are not really related to what they're doing, like an addictions model or treating their ADHD or whatever that they have used already to blame what they did. Again, this avoids the original sexual interest.

# **Typologies of Internet Sexual Offenders**

# Typologies, Net Crime Offender Conditions

- Emotions disorder
- Personality Disorders
- Paraphilic (Deviant Disorders)
- Combinations of Typologies
- Risk factors associated with varying types

# Emotions Disorder

- Emotions disorder
- Emotions disorders include things like:
  - Depression
  - Body Morphic Disorder (Sees self as unattractive)
  - Social Anxiety
  - Feeling of Inadequacy
  - Anxiety towards age-appropriate, consenting, fully functioning adult females

# Personality Disorders

- The most common personality disorders with Net Crime offenders are:
  - Schizoid Personality Disorder
  - Schizotypal Personality Disorder
  - Narcissistic Personality Disorder
  - Dependent Personality
  - Antisocial Personality Disorder

# Paraphilic (Deviant) Disorders

- This includes:
  - Exhibitionism
  - Voyeurism
  - Pedophilia
    - Exclusive versus nonexclusive
- Paraphilia Not Otherwise Specified

# Combinations of Typologies

- \* Combinations can assist in determining risk
  - Emotions Disorder with Personality Disorder
  - Emotions Disorder and Paraphilic Disorder
  - Personality Disorder with Paraphilic Disorder
  - Emotions Disorder, Personality Disorder, and Paraphilic Disorder (all three)



# **Risk factors associated with varying types**

- **Paraphilia and Personality Disorders**
  - Increased risk (known risk for hands-on behavior)
- **Child Oriented Lifestyle**

# Research

## Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Ybarra (2008) Research

- Internet offenders pretended to be teenagers in only 5 percent of the crimes studied by researchers.
- Nearly 75 percent of victims who met offenders face-to-face did so more than once.
- Online sex offenders are seldom violent, and cases involving stalking or abduction are very rare.
- Youth who engaged in four or more risky online behaviors were much more likely to report receiving online sexual solicitations.

# Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Ybarra (2008) con't

- The online risky behaviors included maintaining buddy lists that included strangers, discussing sex online with people they did not know in person and being rude or nasty online.
- Boys who are gay or are questioning their sexuality may be more susceptible to Internet-initiated sex crimes than other populations.
- Researchers found boys were the victims in nearly one-quarter of criminal cases, and most cases included facts that suggested victims were gay or questioning their sexuality.